Drought in States

†3057. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to refer to the reply to Starred Question 724 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 16th May, 2002 and state whether any all party meeting has been convened by Government to study the drought situation in many States while plenty of foodgrains are available in the country and, if so, the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA) : Yes, Sir. An all party meeting on "Public Distribution System" was held on 25th July, 2003 under the Chairmanship of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India in which all the participants expressed their views for streamlining the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) in the country.

Complaints over quality of foodgrains from States

3058. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA :
PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ :
SHRI R.S. GAVAI :
SHRI JHUMUK LAL BHENDIA :

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that many States have complained about the poor quality of foodgrains supplied to them;

(b) if so, the details of States that have complained in this regard in the last three years, year-wise;

(c) whether the main reason for poor quality foodgrains is the long periods of storage of foodgrains in various FCI godowns; and

(d) if so, the remedy Government plan to initiate to correct this in the near future keeping buffer stocks in mind?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA) : (a) and (b) Foodgrains of fair average quality conforming to

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act (PFA) standards are distributed under Public Distribution System (PDS).

Some complaints about the quality of foodgrains supplied under the PDS were received during the last three years.

During 2000-2001, complaints were received from the State Governments of Arunachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Sikkim and Tripura regarding supply of foodgrains of poor quality, especially rice procured under relaxed specifications (URS). Keeping in view the reluctance of consumers, the supply of URS rice of 1997-98 Kharif Marketing Season was stopped.

During 2001-2002, the Governments of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and NCT of Delhi complained about the supply of "luster lost" wheat while the Government of Goa and Kerala complained about the poor quality of rice stocks. It was explained to the State Governments that, except in appearance, lustre lost wheat is as good as sound wheat, especially in terms of nutritional value. The FCI officers were instructed to ensure that rice of good quality only was supplied under the PDS to Goa and Kerala.

During 2002-03, the Governments of Rajasthan, Delhi, Gujarat and Maharashtra had complained about issue of poor quality of "lustre lost" wheat under PDS and Government of Karnataka and Kerala had complained about the issue of poor quality of rice under various schemes. Keeping in view the reluctance of consumers, the issue of "luster lost" wheat for distribution under TPDS was stopped. FCI was instructed to ensure that rice of good quality only is supplied under the PDS in Karnataka and Kerala.

(c) and (d) No, Sir. FCI stores foodgrains in scientifically constructed godowns under proper supervision of trained quality control officials who preserve the quality of foodgrains during storage. FCI has a standard procedure for issuing stocks under the "first in first out" principle. State Governments are free to inspect the stocks of foodgrains and satisfy themselves about their quality before lifting the same from FCI depots. The State Governments have also been advised to depute an officer not below the rank of Inspector to check the quality of stocks.